CALLIMACHUS' TWO AETIA PROLOGUES

Any consideration of Callimachus' poetic development must depend to a great extent on our interpretation of the two Aetia Prologues, Against the Telchines and The Dream (Pf. Fr. 1 et 2). These Prologues are more important for the student of Alexandrian literary than Callimachus' Hymns and Epigrams, even when the latter deal with literary opinions. Firstly the two Aetia Prologues are undoubtedly programmatic. Secondly, they preface Callimachus' chef d'oeuvre, the Aetia. For this reason they occupy the most prominent place in Callimachus' most important work.

Turning our attention to the extant text, we notice that the first Prologue is directed against the invidious Telchines. It purports to be a counter-attack. The Telchines' initial attack is presumably the accusation that Callimachus has not achieved a unified poetic composition (ξευσμα διηνεκες, a carmen continuum, or a carmen perpetuum) concerning kings and heroes written in many thousands of lines. In contrast, Callimachus is διαγόστιχος. The poet defends himself by asserting that poetry (σοφίη) must not be judged by its quantity (symbolized by the σχοίνος Περσική or παρασάγγης) but by its quality. Thunder is the exclusive feature of Zeus, not of Callimachus, whom Apollo has counselled to keep the Muse lean (λεπταλέη). Callimachus has chosen for himself the untrodden way, the narrow path along which the wagons do not move. He sings like the shrill cicala; he does not bray like asses. It is the former, the winged one (πτερόεις) which delicately feeds on the dew. Such a poet, he hopes, will in his age not be abandoned by the Muses.

The Florentine Scholia which seem to date form the 2nd Century and which appear to have constituted the first page of a lost volume containing Epaphroditus' entire comments on the Aetia, or at least

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1 The conclusion of the Hymn to Apollo contains a problematic attack on unnamed writers whose lengthy poems are literally said to be full of „turgid trash“ like the „great Assyrian river.“ Pf. Epig. 7 contains a cryptic reference to Homer, Pf. Epig. 27 enthusiastically supports Aratus and the „Hesiodic“ tropos, Pf. Epig. 28 censures the commonplace „cyclic“ epic, while Pf. Epig. 52 is addressed to Theocritus.


excerpta form his Hypomnemata, enumerate the Telchines as Asclepiades, Poseidippus and Praxiphanes. Unfortunately, the text is fragmentary at this point, and the names of the remaining Telchines are lost. A remarkable feature of the Telchines is that none was an epic poet whose production ran into "many thousands of lines." On the contrary, two of them were elegiac poets whose work is known to us from the Palatine Anthology — a point which tends to diminish the argument that the Aetia Prologues are primarily directed against poets who did not specialize in die dichterische Kleinmalerei (as Gercke calls it). The point at issue may have been whether Antimachus or Philetas served the designation of Mimnermus redivivus in which the Telchines presumably supported the claim for Antimachus, while Callimachus threw his weight behind Philetas. It is thought on very slender evidence indeed that Apollonius was favorably disposed to Antimachus and that this reason alone justifies his inclusion in the ranks of the Telchines.

Obviously any theory which insists on a Callimachean-Apollonian dispute will try to identify Apollonius as one of the Telchines. It was Rostagni, in fact, who went furthest in an effort to establish Apollonius as leader of the Βασκανίης όλοο γένος. Accordingly, he stressed the Rhodian origin of the name Τέλχινες and interpreted these Callimachi obrectatores, or, as the Scholia call them, μεμφόμενοι αὐτοῦ [sc. Καλ.] τὸ κάτισχον τῶν ποιημάτων, as "i seguaci di Apollo-nio" or οἱ περὶ τῶν 'Απολλόνων. In addition, Rostagni insisted on reading Apollonius' name into the lacuna of lines 10 and 11 of the Florentine Scholia.

Ingenious as is Rostagni's argument, his views have by now been rejected. In the first place, his judgment on the crucial significance of Praxiphanes in the literary environtment of Alexandria can be shown to be in error. He had believed, mistakenly as we shall see, that Praxiphanes, a Peripatetic, had been an ally of Callimachus, a fellow Peripatetic. Secondly, Apollonius cannot be called a Τελχίν in fact, the Rhodian connotation of the word Τέλχινες now appears to apply.

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4 For the qualifications of Coppola's theory made by Vitelli and Norsa, see Torraca, p. 19.
5 See the Florentine Scholia (lines 10—15), Pf. Scholia ad Fr. 1. 1—12.
6 Compare Envy's remark to Apollo in the Hymn to Apollo (line 106) that "οὐκ ἔχεις τὸν άοίδιν δς οὐδ' ὅσι πόντος άοίδειν." See also n. 1.
more fittingly to Praxiphanes than to Apollonius\textsuperscript{10}. In addition, a more thorough examination of the Scholia by Vitelli and Norsa\textsuperscript{11} reveals that Apollonius’ name cannot be fitted into the lacuna without damage to the existing (precious) text\textsuperscript{12}. In short, Rostagni’s signal failure to implicate Apollonius in the \textit{lutte littéraire} against the Telchines tends to confirm Wehrli’s conclusion: „The fact that the very well-informed commentator of the Florentine Papyrus (PSI XI 1219) does not mention Apollonius among the opponents, shows nothing less (beweist nichts Geringeres) than that a feud between the two poets was unknown to him“\textsuperscript{13}. This opinion is shared by Erbse, who is, I believe, correct in maintaining that: „Der Kommentator habe also nur an die Gegner des Kallimachos gedacht, die z. Zt. der Erstausgabe der Aitia literarisch tätig waren. Er müßte aber, trotz seiner bewundernswerten Akribie, den wesentlichen Charakter des Telchinengedichts vekannt haben“\textsuperscript{14}.

The fact that the fragments of the \textit{Aetia} appear to contain two Prologues, \textit{In Telchinas} and the \textit{Somnium} (\textit{Pf. Cr.} 1 and 2), which has led to the belief that the former constitutes part of the \textit{redazione finale} of the \textit{Aetia} at its author’s hand\textsuperscript{15}, suggests to me that in considering Callimachus’ literary development which produced the \textit{Aetia} as we now have it, we should distinguish between two distinct poetic periods.

\section*{Conclusions}

The conclusions I draw after studying the two \textit{Aetia} Prologues are twofold:

1.) Apollonius is \textit{not} mentioned by the Scholia as being one of the Telchines. Any attempt to classify Apollonius as one of the \textit{Callimachi obtrectatones} can be supported only by the most tenuous of

\textsuperscript{10} In his book \textit{Hellenistic Poetry and Art} (p. 106) Webster is more explicit: „To the ordinary reader Telchines suggested not only malice but Rhodes. Among the critics of the Scholiast’s list only Praxiphanes can be called a Rhodian.“ This is all very well, but Webster is working in an area of pure fantasy when he continues: „Is it thinkable that he gave hospitality to Apollonius? He believed in long poetry. As a Peripatetic he would have approved of Antimachus, and Apollonius both used Antimachus and wrote on him“ p. 73. Apollonius used both Homer and Callimachus in his poem, two writers whose literary criteria were antithetical. T.S. Eliot wrote on Milton but did not approve of Milton’s reaction against the Metaphysical poets. For Callimachus’ Προς Ιέραπφαν κυρίως \textit{Προς Ηέρακλης} cf. \textit{Pf. Fr.} 460.

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. n. 4.

\textsuperscript{12} Torraca, pp. 25—26.

\textsuperscript{13} F. Wehrli, „Apollonios von Rhodos und Kallimachos,“ \textit{Hermes} 74 (1941), p. 18.


\textsuperscript{15} G. Capovilla, \textit{Callimaco}, I, p. 220. This constituted Torraca’s \textit{Hauptthese}. This thesis is in no way invalidated by the argument that strictly speaking only the \textit{Somnium} is the \textit{Aetia’s} Prologue, since the \textit{In Telchinas} is a Prologue to the complete Callimachean \textit{ouvrage} including \textit{inter alia} the \textit{Iambi} and the \textit{Hecale}.\textsuperscript{359}
arguments. Webster’s attempt (see fn. 8 and 10) to see in Apollonius a supporter of the Telchines [(a) because there is a “Rhodian-ring” to the “Telchines,” (b) because Apollonius may have been entertained by Praxiphanes during his “exile” at Rhodes, (c) because Apollonius makes use of Antimachus’ Lyde] is very unconvincing. Equally unconvincing is Pfeiffer’s argument which implies that Apollonius can be implicated in the Telchines’ attack on Callimachus because both Praxiphanes and Apollonius were Peripatetics and so literary “conservatives” who favored “organic” epic to Callimachus’ “New Poetry.” There is not a vestige of evidence to support Pfeiffer’s contention that Apollonius’ Argonautica was written according to Aristotelian principles. It is true, as everyone knows, that Aristotle in his Poetics favors not only “organic” but also “cohesive” writing in general. But all epic need not be “organic” (even Aristotle would have admitted this), and certainly the Argonautica, with its manifold digressions and overriding aetiological interest, is not “organic”. In fact these characteristics of the Argonautica make it a sister-genre to the Aetia itself, rather than to the Homeric epics. This point was brilliantly made by Fritz Wehrli whom Pfeiffer would have done well to heed. Wehrli discounted the theory of a literary feud between Callimachus and Apollonius, which he considered to be nothing but a grammarian’s fiction (see n. 13). In addition, Wehrli raised important arguments to show that the Argonautica cannot be construed as a denial or rebuttal of Callimachean poetic canons, but is rather the extension of them.

Pfeiffer is of course aware of the difficulties involved in classifying Apollonius as a Peripatetic or literary “reactionary” along with Praxiphanes. He feels himself — understandably — in hot water, and so he resorts to a hypothetical argument. He claims that Apollonius’ lost Περί Ἀρχιλόχου “was an important link with the Peripatetics”. Pfeiffer continues: “... in this connection (apropos Apollonius’ lost Περί Ἀρχιλόχου), Apollonius seems to have followed a more traditional line than Zenodotus and Callimachus.” Unfortunately, how-

16 See especially the two vitae on Apollonius in C. Wendel’s Scholia in Apollonii Rhodium vetera (Berlin, 1958), pp. 1—2. In the first vita we are told that Apollonius, far form belonging to a rival (“conservative”) literary faction, was Καλλιμάχος μαθητής, and in the second vita that Apollonius έμαθήτευσε Καλλιμάχω. Nothing is said of a quarrel between the two in the two lives. So too P. Händel’s “Die zwei Versionen der Viten des Apollonios Rhodios,” Hermes 90 (1962), pp. 429—443, A. Köhnken’s Apollonios Rhodios und Theokrit: Die Hylas- und Amykosgedichten beider Dichter, Hypomnemata 12 (Göttingen, 1965), p. 14, D. N. Levin’s Apolloniana Minor, TAPA 93 (1962), p. 160. H. Herter, on the other hand, held that the vitae, contrary to appearances, support the idea of a bitter controversy (tiefe Zerrungen) between the two poets. See his „Zur Lebensgeschichte des Apollonios von Rhodos,” RM 91 (1942), p. 312. Herter is following E. Delage’s Biographie d’Apollonios de Rhodes (Paris, 1930).


18 Wehrli (see n. 13), pp. 14—21.

19 Pfeiffer, p. 146.
ever, the Περί Άρχιγόχου is lost; and we are to accept on faith, it seems, Pfeiffer’s word for its contents. Pfeiffer’s argument, technically speaking, is an obscurum per obscurius.

2.) The two Aetia Prologues represent two distinct stages in Callimachus’ literary development. The Dream, as Torraca and Capovilla show (see n. 15), is the original Prologue to the Aetia. A later revision of the poem is responsible for the Prologue Against the Telchines. What these Italian scholars fail to comprehend is that there is a definite development of literary perspective as evidenced by the later Prologue. The earlier Prologue, in which the poet invokes Hesiod, represents his early break with poetry which he saw was characterized by "organic" unity. Such poetry undoubtedly comprised imitations of Homeric epic or other poems which were written in a high-flown or pompous style (a style characterized by poetic σεμνότης). At this stage of his literary career, Callimachus had turned to the "Hesiodic mode" which comprises elegy and poetic etiology. The controversy is between "Homeric" and "Hesiodic" poetic composition.

In the later Prologue, Against the Telchines, Callimachus is attacking poets writing within the elegiac tradition itself i.e. within the "Hesiodic" tropos. Only in Callimachus' second poetic period could the question have emerged of whether Antimachus or Philetas merited the title of Mimnermus redivivus. An increasing anti-"Homeric" orientation marks the development from the earlier to the later Aetia Prologue. The poet has become increasingly intolerant of "Homeric" gravity (σεμνότης) and more ardent in his advocacy of Alexandrian "lightness of touch" or λεπτότης. In fact the poets' devotion to poetic λεπτότης had brought him into violent conflict with other elegiac poets (Asclepiades and Poseidippus), poets whom he may well have supported when he wrote his earlier Aetia Prologue. Such a poetic development is characterized by an increasingly alienated attitude. Callimachus reaction against the polis-oriented concept of classical art has become sharper. The literary innovator has become the literary radical.

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